DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 376 CE 084 322

AUTHOR	Henderson, Liz; Castles, Rachel; McGrath, Majella; Brown, Tony
TITLE	Learning around Town: Learning Communities in Australia.
INSTITUTION	Adult Learning Australia, Inc., Jamison.
ISBN	ISBN-0-949145-32-7
PUB DATE	2000-10-00
NOTE	33p.; Product of the first ALA Community Learning Leaders Program, 2000, and was published to coincide with the inaugural 'Learning City: From Concept to Reality' conference (Albury/Wodonga, October 27-29, 2000). Light type may not reproduce well.
AVAILABLE FROM	Adult Learning Australia, PO Box 308, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614 ($12.50 Australian). E-mail: info@ala.asn.au; Web site: http://www.ala.asn.au.For full text: http://www.ala.asn.au/learningcities/ LearningAroundTown.pdf
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Case Studies; Check Lists; *Community Cooperation; *Community Education; Community Programs; Cultural Pluralism; Definitions; Delivery Systems; Economic Development; Educational Opportunities; Educational Planning; *Educational Practices; Educational Trends; Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society); Guidelines; *Lifelong Learning; Outcomes of Education; Partnerships in Education; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Social Integration
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia; Best Practices; *Learning Communities

ABSTRACT

This booklet explains the features and benefits of learning communities and summarizes Australia's experience with them. Part 1 traces the history of learning communities from the 1970s through the present, presents several definitions of the term "learning community," lists reasons for becoming a learning community, and explains the importance of cultivating diversity when establishing learning communities. Part 2 discusses the following key attributes of a learning community: (1) encourages lifelong learning; (2) promotes social cohesion; (3) builds partnerships; (4) provides learning opportunities for all; (5) encourages economic revival; (6) provides information; and (7) provides forums for discussion. Part 3 profiles the following Australian learning communities: Albury/Wodonga (New South Wales); Ballarat (Victoria); Mawson Lakes (South Australia); Salisbury West (South Australia); and Launceston (Tasmania). Each profile contains information on the learning community's key players, the partnerships they formed, and the learning community's benefits and future. Part 4, which is intended to serve as a tool in planning and checking the progress of local learning communities, presents questions covering the following broad areas: skills and attitudes for the job; defining the job; integrated organization; inclusive; communication; feedback; key learning needs; assessing progress; value for money; and learning from others. Part 5 lists 45 resources. (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 472 376

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Bates

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

learning around town

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

© Adult Learning Australia (ALA)
PO Box 308
Jamison Centre ACT 2614
02 6251 7933

www.ala.asn.au

This booklet was produced by Liz Henderson (ALA); Rachel Castles (BRACE - Ballarat); Majella McGrath (South Gippsland ACE); and Tony Brown (ALA).

It is a product of the first ALA Community Learning Leaders Program, 2000, and was published to coincide with the inaugural *Learning City: From concept to reality*, Conference 27-29 October in Albury/Wodonga.

October 2000

ISBN: 0949145327

Design: Green Advertising (13805)
Illustrations: Liz Henderson, Matt Schmidt and Calen Robinson
Printing: New Millenium Print

learning around town:
learning communities in australia

4

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Learning communities are a new way of promoting economic renewal, and new forms of democratic participation and social inclusion.

> What is a Learning Community[1], Learning City or Learning Town? Why work to create a Learning Community? What Australian experience is there of Learning Communities?

This booklet aims to explore these questions for interested educators, local councillors, community organisations and policy makers. It is a contribution to the discussion about Learning Communities in Australia.

The booklet provides a succinct outline of the emergence of learning communities. It is hoped that the document will provide readers with information that may shape the development of more learning communities.

There are five sections providing background to the concept of learning communities followed by some general conclusions. There are accounts of five different communities in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania and their varying learning community journeys, and a brief outline of international developments.

The final parts of the booklet provide some 'steps' you might want to consider as well as references for anyone wanting more information.

1 It should be noted that for the purpose of this guide, the term Learning Community is used to describe a learning city, town or a community regardless of its size or location.

part one
learning communities

WHAT ARE LEARNING COMMUNITIES?

> Communities, which succeed economically in the 21st century will have a diverse economy, strong links with knowledge-based organisations and a well-educated workforce. They can provide a vision for the community; survey the community's learning needs; unite diverse learning opportunities; recognise learning achievements; and be an example to others. (Philip Candy, Chairperson Ballarat: A Learning City)

The concept of the learning city or learning town has been circulating since the 1970s, but an OECD conference in Gothenburg in 1992 gave it new impetus. The conference encouraged a new focus on cities as a means of extending lifelong learning. Donald Hirsch, in his Gothenburg report, argued that lifelong learning could be progressed through harnessing existing, albeit disconnected, city resources and partnerships. This is because cities occupy a unique place for a number of reasons:

- people relate to and identify with the place where they live and work. Cities provide a focus for learning activity. They also make national policies more meaningful by demonstrating how they relate to people's lives
- education and particularly post school education is not a coherent system but a fragmented one and often competitive. The focus of the city is a useful one for collaboration and co-ordination
- the community based nature of much adult learning makes it possible to build learning elements into city led community activity and a city can also be a means for community action

Since 1997 several Australian towns have been working with the learning city idea. In Victoria the adult community education (ACE) sector pressed on with initiatives consistent with the learning city concept and in 1998 the City of Wodonga declared itself Australia's first Learning City.

More recently the Victorian government has sponsored nine Victorian communities to become Learning Towns. This initiative intends to 'link ACE organisations, TAFE and other educational institutions, industry and local government in the common purpose of economic and social development.'

In the United Kingdom a Learning Community is described as one where industry, education, business

and individuals work together to address the learning needs of the whole community and to promote the principles of lifelong learning. It is able to use existing social and institutional relationships to bring about cultural shifts in perceptions of the value of learning for all. (DfEE 1998b, 5)

A Learning Community encourages, recognises and celebrates lifelong learning for all, working toward stimulating economic regeneration and social cohesion for the whole community. Learning Communities are about developing partnerships that include all sectors of the community.

> "Cities are not just places where large numbers of people live and work; they should be important places where people experience leisure, culture, enterprise and education – in other words, places which have learning at their heart". (Albury/Wodonga: Australia's first Learning City)

> "Learning is not only engagement in formal education processes. It is the connecting of the many kinds of learning: in the workplace, the voluntary organisations and the family". (DfEE, 1998)

WHY BECOME A LEARNING COMMUNITY?

Becoming a learning community involves improving the links between existing educational providers (whether formal, non-formal or informal), establishing new pathways, and promoting community understanding of and participation in lifelong learning.

The desire to become a learning community often stems from the need for a community to renew itself in a period of change. Becoming a Learning Community may fulfil a need to stimulate economic development, create employment and provide learning opportunities for all members of the community.

For some, there is a need to face significant economic and social change. This may take the form of industries closing down – resulting in high levels of local and regional unemployment, environmental stress on the community, difficulties in resolving urban planning issues or other demographic changes and the challenges of rapid technological change. New skills and new ways of dealing with these challenges are required. In the Scottish city of Glasgow, often seen as an old industrial city, they

decided that

> There was a need to move forward; Lifelong Learning was seen as the way forward, toward flexible and adaptable knowledge-based economy and as a way for people to achieve lifelong employability. (Glasgow – The Learning City)

The Learning Community is one that strives to understand how it is changing in order to shape its future. The creation of learning resources that allow for, or create, a community of skilled and flexible learners who work toward the common goals of Lifelong Learning, and ultimately the creation of a Learning Society that is all inclusive.

> Communities which are in the process of regeneration need to learn, not merely to develop the skills of their citizens but also to understand how the different parts of city life – social, cultural, political as well as economic – can connect together more effectively to sustain the future well-being of the community. (DfEE 1998b, 6)

There is now a growing network of Learning Communities across the world stretching from the United Kingdom and Europe to the USA, Canada, and to Australia.

DIVERSITY

Just as the reasons for establishing Learning Communities vary from place to place, so to do the goals and the ways in which these are achieved.

The distinct differences in community infrastructure mean that the key players or the driving forces behind individual learning communities may differ. It is important to recognise this diversity because there is no specific model for becoming a learning community. There is no correct route to follow – each community will make its own path by walking it.

Some communities start by establishing a committee of interested parties, others start with the existing networks forming partnerships and stimulating local interest before moving on to forming a committee.

The development of a Learning Community is not always a smooth one; each community may experience some difficulties that they will have to overcome, ranging from raising funds to stimulating community involvement and maintaining the momentum.

part two
learning from other communities' experiences

LIFELONG LEARNING

There is much to be gained from looking at the experience of other Learning Communities. In some cases work has been under way for a number of years, in others the preparatory work has been completed and the first 'public' steps are being taken. In yet others there is interest in the idea and an eagerness to know more.

If a Learning Community aims to encourage individuals, employers and community organisations to become involved in learning throughout their lives how can it be achieved?

> Lifelong Learning is not just restricted to the workplace – it needs to apply to everyone throughout their life time. Learning needs to be a seamless process, as instinctive as breathing, which makes the most of an individual's potential and boosts their self-respect. (Building a Learning City – Scottish Enterprise, Glasgow)

There are several important factors in creating a favourable, receptive environment to the concept of a Learning Community.

PROMOTES SOCIAL COHESION

The impetus for Learning Cities has been the need to address specific local problems. The old way of doing things is no longer working. New challenges require new responses, new solutions and new processes. Each community faces different circumstances but what has been common to many has been increased unemployment, shifts in employment patterns as new industries replace old, particular environmental problems, and changes in a community's demographics. These can often cause tensions in the community.

Without developing the means of understanding these changes, their causes and their implications a community is likely to get stuck in and find it difficult to come up with practical, ongoing solutions.

By encouraging local community involvement, including that of disadvantaged groups, and using learning to bring together existing expertise communities are discovering new ways of responding to economic and social change.

BUILDS PARTNERSHIPS

Building effective community partnerships is the key to learning communities.

> We must recognise from the outset that the partnership is a mechanism for change. (DfEE 1998)

The strength of the partnerships established or maintained in a learning community is vital. Partnerships often already exist between:

- individuals and community organisations
- professional associations, employer groups and trade unions
- providers of education and training at every level
- key agencies (including local government authorities, chamber of commerce, business development agencies and regional partners)
- clubs, societies and associations

Each should be encouraged to contribute their existing relationships and expertise to the common range of learning opportunities, creating the potential for collaborative learning and development.

> The Wangaratta/Benalla Learning Towns project will provide the context, leadership and vision to strengthen existing collaboration between education/training providers, local government, business and other agencies. (Danny O'Donoghue, Chief Executive Officer, The Centre, Wangaratta).

> In contemporary society learning occurs in many contexts so that a learning society is by its nature a partnership society and partnership must be seen as the principle pathway towards a learning culture and society. The impact of modern technologies, which is extending the reach of learning opportunities, is strengthening this core feature of a learning society. (Kearns 2000b)

Key institutional involvement and the relative importance of individual stakeholders will vary from community to community, although there will always be a need for a driving force for the Learning Community concept.

> ...becoming a learning city... brought all of our city together – industry groups, community groups, and education groups. ...In the strategic and corporate plan of our city, everything we do has to relate back to the notion of lifelong learning. (CEC, Albury/Wodonga 2000)

Partnerships are not only important in a local context but are also important internationally. For Albury/Wodonga a significant point came when they joined the UK Learning City network, which gave them

> "access to the latest developments in the UK, Europe and the US and gives us the opportunity to showcase the Wodonga region". (CEC, Albury/Wodonga 2000, 6)

"The need to link local enterprises, and the learning infrastructure they rely on, into the global supply chain that ensures they are connected to opportunities for growth, investment and new jobs". (GATE – Geelong – the Learning City)

PROVIDES LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

A further key to building a learning society: to develop successful access strategies that bring non-learners back to learning and to active participation in society. (Kearns 2000b)

Improving access to learning opportunities and developing innovative technology-supported learning methods can enable increased access to learning, especially from among those groups who are often disadvantaged or denied access to learning.

The border towns of Albury and Wodonga intend to:

[Establish] a 'One-Stop-Learning Shop' in the central business district to enable learners to gain information and advice on local provision of education, training and employment options. The One-Stop-Learning Shop will also provide vocational assessment and guidance to enable all learners to engage or re-engage in their work aspirations and the learning opportunities which will assist with meeting their goals.(CEC, Albury/Wodonga, 10)

Learning is a complex process, it cannot be understood simply in terms of formal education and training. People are often involved in informal ways of learning. Almost without exception learning communities make improved use of existing facilities but also make imaginative use of more accessible locations for learners.

People have a stronger motivation to learn in places where they feel at ease. In such environments, they can turn positive attitudes to learning into practical results. (Latham 2000)

In a learning community, the aim is to provide learner-centred facilities, by catering to the needs of individuals, rather than forcing them to mould to the resources available. Glasgow's 'Real' project has for example re-made one of its libraries a learning centre and placed it alongside the indoor swimming pool. One result has been increased patronage of both the learning centre and the pool.

ENCOURAGES ECONOMIC REVIVAL

A learning community explicitly links learning to social and economic well-being. By focusing on innovation and enterprise, learning community initiatives can encourage economic and skill development in various ways.

Engaging industry and community organisations as partners in education and training can further facilitate employment opportunities and benefit the whole community.

PROVIDES INFORMATION

By integrating and strengthening existing networks a learning community can offer more effective information, advice and guidance services for learners.

And by utilising the range of available technologies a learning community can provide regular information on learning opportunities via the media, electronic databases and information centres. The media can also promote achievement and stimulate a community-wide appetite for learning.

Special events, such as Adult Learners Week, open days, community festivals can also be used as a way of disseminating information on learning opportunities, the local learning community and the benefits of a learning culture.

> Australia's first Festival of Learning was held for one month (August - September 1999) culminating in the national Adult Learners Week. This festival created extraordinary interest and participation from our community and highlights the many initiatives of the Wodonga Learning City. The concept of learning, being the key to the future development of our city, is now being widely embraced (CEC, Albury/Wodonga, 6)

A Learning Community will place considerable focus on the advancement of information technology skills or 'information literacy'.

Extending access to information can stimulate motivation for learning, facilitate access to learning and create a more skilled local population and a more informed community and local electorate.

PROVIDES FORUMS FOR DISCUSSION

A learning community can create forums for dialogue on a wide range of local issues. In doing so it can create the means for the community to learn from its own experience and from the experience of others.

> Partnerships/collaboration need to become part of a broader public dialogue. Their purpose is to clarify the future of the community in an era of global change. Only by enabling the different communities to take part in a dialogue to shape the forming of public policy and its implementation can their specific needs be accommodated and the differences be reconciled. (DfEE 1998b)

part three
looking at the practice

AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

ALBURY/WODONGA

In 1998, the city of Wodonga, on the Victorian side of the Murray River, was declared Australia's first Learning City. Shortly after this declaration, the City of Albury, five kilometres north, on the NSW side of the border, joined Wodonga and they now form the Albury/Wodonga Learning Town.

The significance of this joint alliance demonstrates that partnerships can be formed even when a geographical separation exists. Albury/Wodonga is also the site of Australia's inaugural Learning Cities conference in October 2000.

The Albury/Wodonga Learning Community has successfully managed to form partnerships between City Councils, education and training providers, universities, business and industry, schools and community organisations.

THE KEY PLAYERS – WHO RAN WITH THE CONCEPT?

The City of Wodonga established a broad based planning team and when the City of Albury joined the partnership it was expanded to include representatives of other educational and cultural organisations in the wider area.

Wodonga and Albury are fortunate in that they already support an abundance of learning institutions, public and private, catering for all ages, incomes and abilities. The cities are committed to building on these foundations by fostering cooperation and forging partnerships between learning institutes, community groups and business so that all will benefit.

WHO THEY DREW IN – INVOLVEMENT

> "Establishment of a partnership with Investment Albury Wodonga (IAW) which is responsible for all economic development, all tourism and all major events for the cities of Albury and Wodonga. This ensures that learning is a key issue in every aspect of the work that IAW undertakes". (Learning Towns Network – Proposal)

Committee members contributed significant amounts of time, in-kind support including resources, of venues and utilised their networks to promote the learning community.

The Albury/Wodonga Committee comprised:

- The City of Wodonga
- Continuing Education Centre
- Wodonga Institute of TAFE
- La Trobe University Wodonga

- Wodonga and Albury Secondary and Primary Schools Cluster
- Charles Stuart University
- Riverina Institute of TAFE
- Upper Murray Neighbourhood House Network
- Albury Neighbourhood network
- Upper Murray Regional Library
- Albury City council
- Investment Albury Wodonga (IAW)
- KPMG Accounting
- Albury Neighbourhood House Network

THE BENEFITS FOR ALBURY/WODONGA

No single institution can provide all the learning opportunities for all members of a community throughout their lives. It was recognised that there are many small, relatively isolated, groups in the community which take little active part in its life.

The establishment of the Learning Community concept within the Albury/Wodonga area facilitates linkages between all the providers of education, from pre-school through primary and secondary schools, universities, TAFE colleges, Adult Education Centres, Neighbourhood Houses and the University of the Third Age. This partnership encourages participation in lifelong learning by all sectors of the community, thus reducing the likelihood of excluding groups and individuals.

A key factor in gaining the support of the City Councils was the planning team's ability to demonstrate the economic benefits in providing lifelong learning opportunities.

Albury/Wodonga is looking to learning as a way of helping the community prosper and meet the ever-changing demands of our society.

> The development of a Technology Park has begun. This area ...has already attracted widespread interest and has attracted a major software engineering company (ADACEL) to locate in Wodonga providing 250 jobs. (CEC, Albury/Wodonga, 5)

In 2000 a new Employee Development Program, where business supports their employees with learning opportunities other than those required for their job or profession, is being promoted.

Another anticipated outcome of this orientation is the belief that learning will help in making the community more tolerant and able to adapt to new experiences.

> Learning communities engage, stimulate and re-invigorate people's imagination. Learning communities harness our courage and integrity to make the future happen. (Dorothy Lucardie, Executive Director, CEC, Albury/Wodonga)

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The city of Wodonga has included the Learning City in its corporate and strategic planning. This enables the City to incorporate initiatives that foster interaction and the formation of alliances and networks between Council, community organisations and business houses.

Albury/Wodonga aim to work toward expanding the development of the Learning City concept to include local shires and townships, to improve the portability of learning, develop community wide coalitions, reinforce local government's role and improve local coordination of planning. And it aims to continue exploring and implementing arrangements for new learning technologies in education, industry and the economy.

The learning city concept is now well established among the people of the Cities of Wodonga and Albury.

BALLARAT: A LEARNING CITY (VICTORIA)

In September 2000 Ballarat became Australia's second official learning city. It was the result of two years work.

The Ballarat Vision:

> In 2010, the City of Ballarat is recognised, nationally and internationally as a Learning City – the resultant benefits are readily recognised in social and economic indicators and learning is embraced for learning's sake by all members of the community.

In the words of Ballarat's Mayor John Barnes:

> Using our brains to greatest advantage won't come about without developing ourselves. Firstly, Ballarat needs to embrace the concept of the Learning City. This doesn't just mean we brand ourselves that way for marketing purposes. It requires a radical shift in our perceptions of ourselves as lifetime learners. It doesn't mean that we're all studying at university or TAFE or secondary school. What it means though, is that we recognise that we have the capacity to learn through everything we do.

THE KEY PLAYERS - WHO RAN WITH THE CONCEPT?

In July 1998, after attending the First European Conference on Learning Cities held in Southampton, Professor Philip Candy from the University of Ballarat gave a public presentation in the Ballarat Town Hall. The presentation was jointly sponsored

by Business Ballarat and the Ballarat Education Network, and subsequently led to the establishment of a Learning City Task Force including five key members representing community, business and education, who commenced the strategic planning process.

Early consultations with key stakeholders in the community had met with some resistance, feedback indicating that the concept or philosophy did not sound strong enough to lead the community in invigorating economic growth and social cohesion. However through the persistence of the Taskforce and their lobbying with the philosophy, the Ballarat community gradually started to accept the importance of becoming a Learning City. Activities such as; community forums; regular articles and editorials in the local newspaper; presentations by eminent speakers such as Robert Theobold and Peter Ellyard; and the creation of a Website, all assisted in building interest in the concepts of a Learning City and Lifelong Learning.

In May 2000, Ballarat was successful in receiving 'Learning Towns Network' funding through the Victorian State Government. The lead agency for this project is ACE provider 'BRACE Education, Training and Employment' who now employ an Executive Officer to oversee the project. The original Taskforce has been extended and the 'Ballarat: A Learning City' Advisory Board has now been established. The Advisory Board is representative of the whole community and its role is to not only advise the Executive Officer and BRACE, but also to give and receive advice from the general community on Learning City initiatives.

THE BENEFITS FOR BALLARAT

- a strengthening of the skills and knowledge of the workforce
- encouraging company and community based knowledge generation, innovation, entrepreneurship and networking for sustainable economic performance improvement and development
- building stronger partnerships between industry and local educational providers to create more responsive and better targeted education and training
- extending access to the benefits of economic success to marginalised community members and groups by enhancing 'pro-learning' attitudes and skills
- creating opportunities for social learning networks – institutional and community based activities in 'real' and 'virtual' environments which facilitate learning and learning skills

- developing information and communication technology skills across the community to improve communication access, assist in community inclusiveness, and facilitate a community commitment to a positive vision for the future

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The Ballarat: A Learning City Advisory Board has developed a business plan and is now working on the implementation plan.

Current and future initiatives include:

- lift-out supplements (three per year) in the local newspaper outlining learning activities in the community
- maintaining the website
- establishing a Learning Shop
- continuing collaboration with existing networks
- promoting both the concept of a learning city and practical activities which support the value of learning within Ballarat
- developing pathways for all learners from childhood throughout life
- working collaboratively with other education providers and registered training organisations
- encouraging industry involvement as an equal partner in the development of a Learning City
- developing a culture of industry working with education providers to provide training that is appropriate to industry needs
- increasing local government support and commitment to the concept of a Learning City and
- research to assess the impact of a learning city model on the VET sector and across the community

> Ballarat now has a way to formally celebrate the amazing infrastructure and accessible learning opportunities it already has, and to develop new initiatives. (Rachel Castles, Executive Officer, Ballarat: A Learning City)

MAWSON LAKES (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)

Unlike the other case studies outlined in this document, the Mawson Lakes experience has an entirely different motivation. Mawson Lakes is 12 kilometres north of Adelaide, is set on a 620 hectare site, and is to be developed as a master-planned urban community accommodating 10,000 permanent residents, 5,000 university students with employment for around 6,000 people.

Mawson Lakes is a joint venture between the South Australian Government and Delfin Lend Lease Consortium and has been billed as a 'unique economic development project and learning

community without peer in Australia and ... a fully integrated 21st Century urban community'.

The concept of a 'city of the future' originated in the 1980s with the proposal to establish a 'high tech city with futuristic architectural design and lifestyle' while making optimal use of advanced information technologies to create a lifelong learning community. (Candy, 79)

THE KEY PLAYERS – WHO RAN WITH THE CONCEPT?

The initial stages of the development required extensive consultation between partners as to 'what [was] real, achievable and right' and focused on

- economic sustainability
- environmental sustainability
- appropriate application of new information technology and telecommunications
- establishment of a culture of continuous improvement
- creation of a learning community
- recreating the sense of the 'village' by bringing back together the often separated functions of living, learning, working and recreating
- new models of urban design and operation (Candy, 79)

Mawson Lakes is different to other Learning Communities having originated not as a community-based development initiative but rather as a commercial masterplanned community on a greenfields site and viewed as a business venture. The people working on the project are paid employees of the consortium and stakeholder partners.

SALISBURY WEST (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)

Salisbury West is part of the Salisbury Local Government Area 25 kilometres north of Adelaide and with a population of 115,000 people.

It is an area with above average levels of unemployment and a high concentration of clerical and service workers, tradespeople and labourers. While it is well served by a range of educational institutions (University of South Australia, the Australian Aviation College, and Para Institute of TAFE) many people do not see themselves as learners. Some think they lack the basic skills and prerequisites to access further education or training or seek out groups or organisations that could help them gain such skills.

There does exists a network of community organisations - schools, neighbourhood houses, volunteer associations, council organisations, health services and migrant resource centres - involved with community development and in designing and working on learning programs.

Because of this combination of demographic characteristics and existing interactions between organisations Salisbury was the subject of a study aimed at developing a framework for developing a learning community. (DETE, 20)

The consultation found that literacy and numeracy skills were highly rated as was developing an understanding that learning has a positive purpose for individuals and the wider community.

Salisbury is aiming to stimulate new types of work through its employment strategy *Learning and Working in the New Millennium*, which has been endorsed by an influential group of residents as part of the Council's urban renewal project. Salisbury Mayor Tony Zappia said the backing of the community reference group was significant.

> An important feature of this project is the emphasis it places on the involvement and participation of the people who are most directly affected by it. We think that it's time employment programs were structured the same way, and the *Learning and Working in the New Millennium* strategy is one of the first projects of its type in this area.

Taking into account both the general characteristics of a learning community and the specific needs of a community like Salisbury the project team reported that:

> The ongoing success of any development is dependent on local participation. The starting point must be a response to existing issues and valuing and building on what is already there. (DETE, 21)

> The key to establishing and maintaining a learning community is involving the community. It must cater to learners of all ages and levels of learning. It must be non-threatening and accessible. (DETE, 23)

It went on to conclude that

> There is a willingness to find different ways when the traditional approaches don't work. Stepping outside the norm and taking different approaches is seen positively. In working collaboratively toward meeting the goals of the project, there is diversity in the types of programs developed to meet the needs of local residents. (DETE, 22)

LAUNCESTON LEARNING COMMUNITY (TASMANIA)

In late 1998 Launceston City Council hosted a Search Conference to find a new way forward following the collapse of government plans to amalgamate shire councils.

THE PROCESS

The Search Conference was structured democratically so that the community could plan its ideal future. The basic rules were:

- the whole system must be in the room. All parts of the community need to be represented
- global exploration is needed before local action
- the focus is on the future and on finding common ground
- the group manages itself and takes responsibility
- all ideas are valid and visible
- problems and conflicts are set aside

Launceston City Council met with community groups to explain the process and seek volunteers. Over 200 responded for the 80 positions available.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Teams were formed around the following community sectors:

- education
- essential services
- business
- government recreation and culture
- seniors
- young people, and
- City Council

The 80 people representing these sectors came together for three days and reviewed the past, explored the present, found common ground and created ideal scenarios for the future. The group formulated a new vision for Launceston – 'our city of learning and innovation open to the world' – and the output from the conference was taken by council to develop a strategic plan for the city, based on the future directions of Governance, Livable City, Business and Employment, Young People, Recreation, Culture and Lifestyle, Rivers, Transport, Education and Research.

THE RESULTS

Annual objectives were set around the future directions strategy and the City Council is still

working with the search teams. The outside is now starting to direct the inside. The ripple effect from the Search Conference has been felt across the entire community, and a feeling of optimism has developed. Educational institutions have joined together in a charter of co-operation, media support has strengthened, and mutually beneficial partnerships between the local community and business, and between State and local government have been formed. In late 2000, the Search Conference is still driving the consultation process.

> The foundation for a learning city is community involvement in setting direction. This involves giving up controls and moving to connections. The role of Council is to create and hold the space where people feel safe to make choices about their future. (Bob Campbell, General Manager, Launceston City Council)

The Council's homepage now welcomes visitors with the slogan 'Our city of learning and innovation open to the world.'

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In 1995 the City of London, the small local authority centred on London's financial district, introduced a voucher scheme entitling each resident to 'buy' a course at one of fifty institutions. In 1996 the scheme was extended to the quarter million people who worked in the City each day. This was financed by matching grants from industry as well as by student contributions. The City's education officer said 'We are trying to create a permanent learning community in line with the world initiative on lifelong learning.'

More recent British initiatives involve a government-led 'learning revolution'. The move towards creating a learning society has helped to stimulate the development of Learning Communities throughout the UK. There are now 40 cities in the UK's Learning City Network including Sheffield, Liverpool, Southampton and Derby.

In Scotland too the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow have adopted the Learning City principle. The experiences and the initiatives of each place vary although the underlying principle of Lifelong Learning remains consistent.

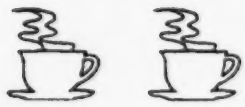
In America there is a different mix of public and private but with infrastructure and partnership policies again important. This is elaborated in a vision 'in which integrated partnerships among stakeholders create the learning environments and expectations necessary to continuously transform the workforce'. Overall, the report emphasises 'collective

efforts, integrated actions, and new thinking'.
(Leadership Group:1999)

The International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC), has 187 member cities from 26 countries. They are all signatories to the Charter of Educating Cities. The IAEC holds biennial conferences. Lisbon will host the VI Conference in November 2000 and Tampere Finland the 2002 conference where the theme will be 'The role of the City in the Globalising World'. More information can be found at *http://www.edcities.bcn.es/angles/index.htm*.

> A city will be an educating city when it can recognise, exercise and develop an educating function in addition to its traditional economic, social, political functions and the provision of services. The educating city must accept as a goal and a responsibility the education, advancement and development of all its inhabitants.
>
> (From the Introduction to the Charter of Educating Cities. Declaration of Barcelona, 1990)

part four
building effective community learning partnerships



New insights are vital to bring initiatives to the fore, but organisation gives them life. Effective partnerships are the building blocks of the Learning City. Those partnerships will bring together private and public organisations, community groups, profit motivated and non-profit groups. They will bring together organisations that may not have worked together before. So planning how to work together, how to establish effective partnerships, is very important.

The following are some ideas for planning and checking progress[2].

1. SKILLS AND ATTITUDES FOR THE JOB

- Has the partnership planned an event to understand each other's purpose and interests? Will a neutral facilitator be needed?
- Will an assessment of the different skills and attitudes within the partnership be needed?

2. DEFINING THE JOB

- Has time been set aside to decide where the partnership is going and how it will get there?
- Is there a clear focus on objectives? Is there an action plan that is SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-related?
- Are the resources available to deliver on the plan?
- Is there a coordinator with enough status to manage the plan?

3. INTEGRATED ORGANISATION

- Does the action plan contribute to the wider vision of the town/city/community?
- Is it clear how the different parts of the partnership contribute?
- Does the whole add up to more than the sum of the parts?

4. INCLUSIVE

- Does the composition of the partnership reflect the diversity of the community?
- Is the community sector represented?
- Are employers and trade unions involved?
- Are indigenous and ethnic communities involved?
- Are women present in sufficient numbers?
- Is the local media involved?

5. COMMUNICATION

- How will the partnership engage the wider community?
- Who is its message targeted to?
- Has the support of local celebrities been sought?
- Will there be a unique logo or brand developed?
- Will there be special events to launch the learning community and/or action plan?

2 These checkpoints have been slightly adapted from Martin Yarnit's *Towns, cities and regions in the learning age* (2000)

- Can you use the annual Adult Learners Week as a means of raising the profile of learning?

6. FEEDBACK

- How will you gauge people's response to what you are doing?
- Do you intend to target specific sections of the community? Do you know which ones? Are you agreed?

7. KEY LEARNING NEEDS?

A number of common problems confront almost every community. But there are also specific issues for communities. Some issues have a greater or lesser priority depending on the local circumstances.

- Have you identified the critical issues in your community?
- Do you have a clear plan for responding to the learning needs of:
  - Small and medium enterprises and their workforce, in expanding and contracting sectors?
  - People who need to develop their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills?
  - Young people in transition from school to work?
  - Excluded groups?

You will need a review system that enables you to know if you are on the right path.

8. ASSESSING PROGRESS

- Have you set a small number of key outcome targets and a system for collecting information and reviewing the data collected?
- Can you show the value added by your activities?
- Have you checked your activity against other learning communities? How do you compare?
- Have you considered how you will publicise your progress within your community?

9. VALUE FOR MONEY

- Do you know what it costs to carry out your activities?
- Do you know which activities are worth investing in? Are there areas that need more investment?
- Is there a more effective way of using existing resources?
- Is the partnership managing to attract mainstream funding to achieve its objectives?
- Is there too much dependence on marginal or short term funding?

10. LEARNING FROM OTHERS

- Have you considered joining with other learning communities as a way of sharing good practice and keeping in touch with a changing policy environment?

part five resources

AUSTRALIA

Learning Cities Conference page
http://www.ala.asn.au/learningcities/Conf_prog.htm

Adult Learning Australia (ALA)
Learning Cities Interest Group
http://www.ala.asn.au/interests/

Ballarat: A Learning City
http://www.ballarat.edu.au/learningcity

Ballarat's Mayor John Barnes explains why Learning is important for Ballarat at
http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/toward_a_community_plan.htm
see especially Section 4

City of Wodonga (Victoria)
http://www.cow.bazar.com.au/

Victorian Learning Towns Network
http://www.acfe.gov.au/publications/learning/

City of Marion (South Australia)
http://www.marion.sa.gov.au

City of Salisbury (South Australia)
http://www.salisbury.sa.gov.au

City of Launceston (Tasmania)
http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/index.php3

INTERNATIONAL

UK

Learning City Network. This website is hosted by the UK Department for Employment and Education (DfEE).
http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/learningcities

Citinet
Sheffield's network of learning centres.
http://www.citinet.org.uk

City of Norwich – Norwich: A Learning City
http://www.norwich.gov.uk/council/initiatives/learning.html

NIACE
The National Institute for Adult Continuing Education

http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/learningcities/default.htm

SCOTLAND

Glasgow – Learning City
http://www.glasgow-learning.net

EUROPE

International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC)
http://www.edcities.bcn.es/

IAEC Charter of Educating Cities
http://www.edcities.bcn.es/angles/carta/icartac.htm

European Conference on Learning Cities
Southampton, 1998
http://www.southampton.gov.uk/education/education/learn.htm

SELECTED TEXTS

Albury/Wodonga (n.d.) Australia's First Learning City (unpublished paper)

ANTA (1999) *National Marketing Strategy for Skills and Lifelong Learning* http://www.anta.gov.au

Candy, J. (1999) *Learning to plan; planning to learn: Learning cities and town planning for the 21st century* (unpublished thesis)

Continuing Education Centre (CEC, Albury/Wodonga) (2000) *Proposal - Learning Towns Network*, Continuing Education Centre Albury Wodonga

DETE (2000) Turning on learning communities: assisting communities to grow, Report and Resource by R. Purcell, MJ Bellew, & S. Ross, Adelaide, S.A. Department of Education, Training and Employment

DfEE (1998a) Learning Towns, Learning Cities, produced by Sue Cara NIACE, Leicester

DfEE (1998b) Practice, Progress and Value: Assessing the Value of Learning Communities (NIACE and University of Birmingham for Learning City Network) - aka The Learning City Toolkit

DfEE (1999) Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal

Falk, I. (1998) *A learning community*, Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia (CRLRA), University of Tasmania

Faris, R. (1998) *Learning communities: cities, towns and villages preparing for a 21st Century knowledge-based economy*, Victoria, B.C. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology

GATE (2000) *Geelong - A Learning City*, Geelong Adult Training and Education

Kearns, P. et al (1999a) *Key strategies for building a learning city*, Global Learning Services, Canberra (unpublished paper)

Kearns, P. et al (1999b) *VET in the Learning Age: The challenge of lifelong learning for all*, vol. 2, Leabrook, NCVER,

Kearns, P. & Papadopoulos, G. (2000a) *Building a learning and training culture: the experience of 5 OECD countries*, Leabrook , NCVER (in print)

Kearns, P. (2000b) *Policies and Strategies to build a Learning Culture – An Overview of Some International Experience and Lessons for Australia*, (unpublished paper)

Landry, C. (2000) *The Creative City: a toolkit for urban innovators*, Stroud, Comedia

Latham, M. (2000) *Learning Communities*, Adult Learning Commentary 14 June 2000, ALA http://www.ala.asn.au/commentaries

Leadership Group (1999) *Skills for a new century: a blueprint for lifelong learning*, http://vpskillsummit.org/blueprint.asp

Longworth, N. (1999) *Making lifelong learning work: learning cities for a learning century*, London, Kogan Page

Marsick, V., Bitterman, J. & van der Veen, R. (2000) *From the learning organization to learning communities towards a learning society*, ERIC Information Series, no. 382, Columbus, ERIC

Maskell, P & Tornqvist, G. (1999) *Building a Cross-Border Learning Region*, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School Press

OECD (1992) *City strategies for Lifelong Learning* (Hirsch Report), Paris

OECD (1998) *High level seminar on competitive strength and social cohesion through learning cities and regions: concepts, development, evaluation*, Paris, 26-27 January

OECD (2000) *Learning Cities and Regions*, Paris

Scottish Development Agency (2000) *Glasgow – the Learning City*, Glasgow

Theobald, R. (1997) *Reworking success: new communities at the new millenium*, British Columbia, New Society

Yarnit, M. (2000) *Towns, cities and regions in the learning age: a survey of learning communities*, London, DfEE

Adult Learning
Australia Inc

Australian
National Training
Authority

CE 08432-7

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: LEARNING AROUND TOWN	
~~Author(s):~~ PRODUCED BY TONY BROWN; LIZ HENDERSON; RACHEL CASTLES; MAJELLA MCGRATH	
Corporate Source: ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA	Publication Date: 2000

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: M F Bates	Printed Name/Position/Title: MARGARET F BATES EXECUTIVE SUPPORT OFFICER
Organization/Address: ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA PO Box 308 JAMISON ACT 2614, AUSTRALIA.	Telephone: 02 6251 7923 FAX: 02 6251 7935
	E-Mail Address: info@ala.asn.au Date: 05/12/02

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

Acquisitions Coordinator
ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Center on Education and Training for Employment
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com
WWW: http://ericfacility.org

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2000)